

"Thou Shalt Know Hereafter."

A message came but yesterday— A message sorrow bringing; Its echoes in my heart to-day Like funeral bells are ringing.

I sit and read the message o'er, As I before have scanned it; But ah! so sorrowful it is, I cannot understand it.

They come to me, my dear, sad friends, They offer consolation; And everyone suggests to me Some new interpretation.

I do not their kind words disdain; Kind hearts are welcome ever; But shallow glosses know I well Give consolation never.

For only He who sent the flood, Whose waters have gone o'er me, Can hold me up and help me through, And to my hope restore me.

One only can rescue me The doubts His deeds created; He only set the bow that tells The waters have abated.

And so in patience still I wait In my lone habitation; He dwelleth in the darkness, too; I ask no explanation.

—W. Boyd Carpenter, D. D.

The Luxury of Preaching.

BY THE REV. SMITH BAKER, D. D.

The dictionary defines luxury as "exuberant enjoyment" or "complete satisfaction." Goldsmith says, "Learn the luxury of doing good," thus re-defining the word from its physical and selfish meaning.

A celebrated merchant remarked to a company of clerks, "The secret of success in the store is to love the goods you have to sell and to feel that each piece of cloth is the best piece of cloth for the price in the world." I have thought of the remark a great many times. What a pleasure to trade with a man who acts as though it was a luxury for him to sell you a yard of cloth! What a delight to talk with a farmer who speaks as though he loved his farm as a mother loves her child!

What an inspiration to hear a woman sing as though it was her greatest joy! All good work is a delight to him who does it. The student must love his science or his work will be a failure. Common capacity with great love will do better work than great capacity and little love. The superior teacher is the one who can wake up the most love for study in the pupil. Love fixes the attention, strengthens the memory, and gives power to the words. Work, when loved, passes from a drudgery to a luxury. The great doctors are such as love the difficult cases; they enjoy a contest with disease.

Nowhere is this law more true or more important than in preaching. When it is done only as a duty then it has but little power. It may be instructive and orthodox and eloquent, but it will be cold. It may interest but not move men. Ah, what hard work it must be to preach from duty!—hard for the preacher and harder for the hearers.

Sometimes duty will be the law which holds a man to his work, and when love has become cold then let duty be the power; but when duty melts into love, then work becomes a joy. Preaching, above anything else, should be an overflow of brain and heart and the whole man. Then it is a joy, a luxury, to preach—to preach anywhere. Of course there is the work of preparing something to say, week after week, to the same congregation; but the preparing is a luxury. A true preacher enjoys getting ready to preach. It is a delight, as it is a delight for a mother to prepare clothes for her unborn baby. And when the preparation is made, there is no other exhilaration, or intoxication, equal to preaching! How can a man help enjoying the work of preaching? People ask, "Do you ever get tired of preaching?" No. True preachers sometimes are tired after preaching, but never tired of preaching. If we could only have something to say, we would like to preach three times a day for one thousand years. Not that all are ever satisfied with our sermons, for we are always more ashamed than any of our hearers are of the poor way in which the preaching is done; but there is such a luxury, surpassing all other pleasure, in telling the story of the Cross. It is no rest not to preach. Ministers, more learned, more eloquent, better every way, come round; and it is always a sacrifice to have them preach (though they can do it so much better) because it is such a joy, a luxury, to preach, that we rather do it than not.

How it is that some good brethren with one little parish and one sermon a week can be contented, we do not understand. It seems to us we would get together two people and beg the opportunity to preach; it is such a luxury. When the able agents of our mission boards come, we are reluctant to give way to them (much better as it is for the people) simply because it is such a luxury to preach. We never

ask anyone to preach for us—save now and then, from a sense of duty to the people, that they may hear a better sermon; and then it is a cross for us. We do not mean that we never dread preaching, and never tremble upon entering the pulpit. We always do, never more so than now, and the dread and the trembling are a part of the luxury. What a delight to commence trembling and to end trembling! When the blood, the muscles, the nerves, the brain, the heart, the soul, the whole man, has become thrilled with the truth and the love of souls and the Spirit of God, then one enters into the highest joy possible this side of the unseen world. Notice also that the people are apt to enjoy preaching quite in proportion as the preacher enjoys it. If we preach as a duty, they will listen as a duty. If we preach as an art, to entertain, they will come to be entertained; but if we preach as a delight they will come to hear as a delight.

Talk about the joys of wealth! True, it has its joys. Talk about the pleasures of culture! True, it has its pleasures. But deeper, higher, richer, sweeter, more luxurious than all, is the opportunity of preaching the Gospel. God pity the man who is not satisfied to be a preacher! Only heaven can give a greater luxury.—Morning Star.

The Voice of the Lord.

If God should speak to us today in such a way that we could recognize His voice, would we not listen attentively to the message? If we should hear Him speaking from the sky, as Saul of Tarsus heard Him, would we not go at once and do as He should command? No doubt we think so, but it is not at all certain that we would. The truth is, God is as near to each one of us as He was to Saul of Tarsus, and He speaks to us as distinctly as He did to Abraham and the prophets. If we do not hear the voice which is lifted up to-day, we would not hear if He should speak with an audible voice.

God speaks through nature. Is there no voice in nature? When the sun rises in the morning does he not bring to us the greetings of the Creator? And when he goes down at night does he not leave with us a message of God's goodness? When the stars look down from the quivering blue do they not tell us something? Are there no lessons in the flowers, the growing corn, and the golden harvest? Some one will say, "This is the voice of nature." So it is, but what is the voice of nature? Nature is not intelligent. When an unintelligent creature brings an intelligent message we know that it is the message of an intelligent mind. The mouth speaks, but it is the mind that directs the mouth what to say. Nature speaks, but nature is only the messenger; the Author of the message is intelligent.

Sometimes nature speaks with a loud voice, as when the earthquake shakes the mountains or the thunder shakes the sky, telling of majesty and power. Sometimes nature speaks with a still, small voice, as when the gentle zephyr whispers "Peace," or when the rose and the lily smile and tell of beauty and of love.

The voice of God may be heard within. Is there not a voice within telling of the past and of the future? Is there not a voice in the heart speaking of sin and of duty? Some will say, "The voice within is the voice of conscience, of reason, of memory, of affection, of hope." So it is, but is not this the voice of God? If the faculties of the mind were free from the domination of sin and from the limitations of the finite, the voice they utter would always be in harmony with the will of God, for it is the voice of God. The voice of the Lord, then, is not far away in Palestine and in the time of Abraham, but it is here. It speaks to us and within us.

We may hear the voice of the Lord in the character and lives of good men and women, and especially in the lives of Christian parents. Christ was the Word. He was an expression of God's character and will. Every true Christian is a word of God. The goodness and love of God are set forth more clearly in good men than in any other way, except in the life of Christ Himself. God speaks to us in all the events of life. In every affliction, every restoration, every visit to the afflicted, every funeral, every mercy, the voice of the Lord may be heard.

But especially does He speak to us in the Bible. The voice of the Lord may be heard in every good book, but the Bible is preeminently the word of the Lord. Here holy men tell us what the will of the Lord is. Here Jesus speaks. It is natural for us to imagine that if we had lived in the time of our Lord, had seen His face and heard His voice, we should have attended to His

message. In some respects those who saw His face and heard His voice had the advantage of us, and in other respects we have the advantage of them. The divinity of our Lord is more clearly demonstrated to us than it was to them. The history of Christianity for more than eighteen centuries has added strong confirmation to His claims. They that saw Him saw the Father, and we who read His words hear the voice of the Father.

The voice of the Lord is a voice of love. The voice of love is more powerful than a voice of authority. The latter may compel us outwardly, but the latter constrains us inwardly. If one who is absent from home on important business should receive a message from his wife, who loves him more than her own life, saying, "Come home," he would leave his business unfinished, take the first train, and cross the continent with as much speed as possible to respond to the call of love. The call of God comes from a heart whose love is deeper and more tender than that of any mother.

The voice of the Lord is persistent. He does not leave the door when He finds it locked. He does not cease to call when we refuse to hear. Through long years He waits.

"God calling yet! shall I not rise? Can I His loving voice despise, And basely His kind care repay? He calls me still; can I delay?"

Chris. Advocate.

"Lay Up."

BY THE REV. E. J. BLEEKINK.

According to Christ there are two kinds of treasures, the earthly and the heavenly. He counsels us to lay up the heavenly. He realized what adepts we naturally are in laying up the former and how liable we are to pass by the latter, to seize the temporal and to neglect the eternal. This is wholesome advice for every age, but especially for our own; when vast fortunes are accumulated, and men are laying up the treasures which moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through and steal, as never before in the history of the world.

There are different modes by which the soul lays up treasures in heaven. First, by securing a title to heavenly things. There are two ways in which titles are secured, by purchase and by inheritance. In the kingdom of God it is exclusively by inheritance. We are to inherit all things, and this inheritance, like every other, finds its title in relationship, sonship. This Christ fully explained at the opening of His ministry, when He told Nicodemus that, in order to enter the kingdom of God, man must be born again, or born from above. And it is upon the basis of this new birth that redeemed man on earth secures and holds a title to all the glories and blessings of heaven. This is the sure foundation for all our hopes.

Again, the soul lays up treasures in heaven by the growth and development of spiritual life. Enjoyment, happiness, bliss are dependent on capacity. It is the poet, the painter, and the musician who in the highest degree enjoy the products of art. And growing artists are constantly laying up treasures for larger enjoyment in the future. The same is true in the sphere of the spiritual. While heaven belongs to every child of God through inheritance, the enjoyment of it will largely depend on capacity. The soul that is developing spiritually is laying up treasures in heaven. The man or woman who is growing in prayer, who is growing in spiritual communion with God, which is the only real prayer, is laying up treasures for larger communion; the soul that is growing in gratitude is like a musical instrument that is gradually brought to perfection. The tireless workers who are spending their days, and largely their nights, like the Saviour Himself, among the sinning and the suffering, and whose hearts, with the years, are growing in tenderness and sympathy, will in eternity be naturally resting, like the beloved John, on the bosom of Christ.

And there is room on his bosom for all. Growth in the graces of the Christian life is therefore a matter of tremendous importance to every child of God. It is a large part of the treasures of heaven.

Again, the soul is laying up treasures in heaven when it is winning other souls to Christ and for heaven. Christ tells us that there is joy among the angels when a sinner repents. Every additional soul augments the joy of heaven. In this selfish world in which we live men exclude their fellow-men from many of the privileges they enjoy for fear that their own enjoyment may be lessened. But increase of joy in heaven is by inclusion, not by exclusion. While a soul would be happy if in heaven alone, its happiness is multiplied by millions through fellowship. As John says in his first epistle: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may

have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

The real business of life, after all, is to "lay up." Christ calls upon His followers to increase heavenly stocks. The man of the world who is accumulating millions, and seemingly to no purpose, is not mistaken as to his business, but is mistaken in that he is engaged in laying up the wrong kind of riches. To secure a title to heavenly treasure by a new birth, to develop Christian life so as to be able to enjoy our inheritance when we shall attain to it, and to gather in the lost sons and daughters of God to the glorious fellowship of the redeemed, is the real task of life. "Lay up! lay up!" idle merriment means loss.—Christian Intelligencer.

Faith and Presumption.

There is a vital difference between faith and presumption; but the line of distinction is often not clearly drawn. Moses leading the children of Israel safely through the Red Sea was an act of faith. Pharaoh and his army by following them, were guilty of presumption, for they had no divine command or promise in which to confide. The Lutheran Observer well says: "There is not a little of what calls itself faith that is downright presumption, and that is found influencing men in both their personal courses and in their concerted action. It usually appears in connection with the doing or attaining of some much-desired thing. For nowhere does a greater power of delusion lurk than in our desires. When we are bent on doing or having something, the desire for it presently marshals a whole array of reasons why we should do or have it. It may be something that we cannot do or have without violating every dictate of prudence, and toward which no leading of Providence points the way. But we shut our eyes to that because we do not want to see it. We will go ahead, we say, and trust God for the result. Many people are in difficulties they have come into just this way. They did not actually intend to do what was unwise or contrary to the will of God. They did not want to displease him; but as John Henry Newman said of Balaam, their first idea was not how to please God, but how to please themselves without displeasing him. It was a case of misplaced emphasis. To say that God will never deliver people from difficulties of their own creating would be to say what is contrary to human experience; but to call the spirit that undertakes what every consideration of prudence would forbid, because the desires are enlisted, a spirit of trust, is to call it by the wrong name."

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The Church Irritant.

We hear a good deal about the church militant, and the church triumphant, but somebody ought to write an article about the church irritant, for it is a very large body. It is composed of people who are always on the lookout for insults, and who are constantly getting snubbed. Their experiences are as variable as the quicksilver in a thermometer, and in the pleasantest kind of weather they are regularly hoisting the storm signal. They have experienced religion just deeply enough to make them cross, and not thoroughly enough to get them completely consecrated; consequently they are out of sorts with the devil for tempting them, out of sorts with their conscience for complaining of them, out of sorts with God for not delivering them, out of sorts with the church for retaining them and out of sorts with their friends for reproving them.

They have a religion which usually runs to pet hobbies and private "interpretations," and any reference by anybody to their particular specialty is taken as a personal insult and an opportunity for retaliation. They have fed so long upon vinegar pickles that their teeth are constantly on edge. Their quills are steadily erected like those of a "fretful porcupine." They are irritated at faithful preaching and never hear any that is just right. Compliments and commendatory language they never indulge in, but notes are magnified to rafters and everything that God or man has done might have been improved if they had been consulted. To go to them for anything is like charging a masked battery, you never know what moment they will open on you with all their guns. It is a great satisfaction to "free their mind." They thrust a discordant note into the sweetest music, they put grit and friction into the smoothest run-

ning machinery, they cast a wet blanket over the pleasantest society, they invite criticism and lay plans to get persecuted and go out of their way to be gored by sharp horns of trouble, and, in short, are members of the church irritant in good and regular standing.—The Pessimist.

A Chain Of Good Deeds.

A miner who has just come back from the Klondike has had made a unique gold watch-chain, composed of splendid nuggets taken from a mine in the newly discovered gold-fields in Alaska. A new paper reporter, writing of it, says "but wherever this miner goes this striking chain of nuggets makes him a walking advertisement for the Klondike, and arouses a desire in other men to go there.

The sincere disciple of Jesus Christ, who seizes every opportunity to do Christ-like deeds, is forming a chain of nuggets far more precious. Wherever he goes the imagination of men is aroused, and their desires awakened to know the Christ who makes such deeds possible. This is what Christ meant when He said: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."—Dr. Banks.

Ye Are Our Epistles.

Do not forget that your life may be the only Bible your neighbor ever reads. Your words, your actions, are spread ever before him, as so many pages to be read. He is forever scanning you carefully, looking for a blot here, a blemish there, or some absolute mistake. You may think lightly of some inconsistent action; he does not, and is quick to take advantage of such to defend his own short-comings. "The one argument I never could answer," said an infidel after conversion, "was the consistent life of my Christian mother."—Presbyterian.

A LIFE SAVED.—Mr. James Bryson, Cameron, states: "I was confined to my bed with inflammation of the lungs, and was given up by the physician. A neighbor advised me to try Dr. Toomas' Electric Oil, stating that his wife had used it for a throat trouble with the best results. Acting on his advice, I procured the medicine, and less than a half bottle cured me; I certainly believe it saved my life. It was with reluctance that I consented to a trial, as I was reduced to such a state that I doubted the power of any remedy to do me any good."

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